

March 8, 2023
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Testimony in Support of 3 Workers Rights Bills:

[HB 6859](#) AN ACT CONCERNING PREDICTABLE SCHEDULING.

[SB 1177](#) AN ACT CONCERNING ONE FAIR WAGE.

[SB 1178](#) AN ACT EXPANDING CONNECTICUT PAID SICK DAYS.

Dear Members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee,

My name is Margaret Henderson and I live in Danbury.

- I'm the President of the Board of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Danbury, a religious community of 150 members and friends. Among other tenets, we believe in recognizing the inherent worth and dignity of every person; striving for justice and equity in human relations; and realizing that we are all interconnected so that what affects some, affects all.
- I'm also a member of Recovery For All, a statewide coalition of more than 60 community, faith, and labor organizations to strive for equity in Connecticut.

Connecticut is a wealthy state in a wealthy country, so why do so many of our residents have a hard time meeting basic needs like food, shelter and utilities? Instead hundreds of thousands of working people are struggling to raise their families, while a handful of wealthy corporations and wealthy residents are getting even richer.

This is not an accident. Decades of bad policy choices have made Connecticut ground zero for the most extreme racial, economic, and gender inequities in the country.

You have an opportunity to improve this situation by passing 3 workers rights bills this session:

HB 6859 AN ACT CONCERNING PREDICTABLE SCHEDULING.

SB 1177 AN ACT CONCERNING ONE FAIR WAGE.

SB 1178 AN ACT EXPANDING CONNECTICUT PAID SICK DAYS.

HB 6859 would give workers in retail, restaurants, hospitality and long-term healthcare their schedule two weeks in advance, the chance to have at least 11 hours off between shifts, and extra pay when these requirements are not met. Most of us would want these reasonable conditions in our workplaces. Moreover, many of these workers were deemed "essential" during the pandemic. They should be able to plan ahead.

SB 1177 would correct an outdated, racist and anti-woman wage law, one that forces workers to rely on tips to survive and thus contributes to the enormous wealth gap in our state. This reliance on tips makes income unpredictable. Also the practice of tipping encourages submission to sexual

harassment and has been shown to be discriminatory, with white service workers receiving larger tips than black service workers for the same quality of service.

As many Connecticut residents know, the minimum wage here will go up to \$15 per hour on June 1. But many people don't know that the subminimum wage for tipped workers is \$6.38 and will not go up. Of the 70,000 tipped workers in Connecticut, 70% are women and 38% are workers of color. We should join the seven states that already operate without the tip credit and require restaurant employers to pay the full minimum wage.

SB 1178 would protect all of us by allowing paid sick days for all workers, not just those of us who are lucky enough to have white-collar jobs. **Almost 90% of Connecticut workers are not guaranteed paid sick days under current law.** Access to paid sick days is critical to racial, gender and economic justice. Yet nationally, nearly 7 in 10 of the lowest wage workers – who are disproportionately women and people of color – do not have access to even a single paid sick day. If the pandemic has taught us anything, it is that sick people need to be able to stay home from work without financial penalty. This bill would also save the taxpayers money on things like welfare and higher payments for more advanced illnesses and complications among the uninsured.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of those workers who are often not well represented in the halls of power.

Respectfully submitted,

Margaret Henderson